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Message Text

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11
ACTION EUR-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9451
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 2524

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR YO
SUBJECT: YUGOSLAV REACTION TO INDIAN NUCLEAR BLAST

1. EDITORIAL IN ENGLISH EDITION OF TANJUG/MAY 24 BY DIPLOMATIC EDITOR VELIMIR BUDIMIR AND ALSO CARRIED IN BORBA, DESCRIBES ASSESSMENT OF OFFICIAL YUGOSLAV CIRCLES" OF INDIAN'S NUCLEAR EXPLOSION AS "DEVELOPMENT OF VERY HIGH SIGNIFICANCE" AND "GREAT ACHIEVEMENT BY FRIENDLY INDIA IN SPHERES OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY", THE MORE SO "SINCE A DEVELOPING COUNTRY DID IT". HE EMPHASIZES THAT TEST IS PART OF PROGRAM TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES LIKE MINING AND ENERGY SOURCE DURING CURRENT WORLD CRISIS WHILE GOI HAS ESCHEWED INTENTION TO PRODUCE WEAPONS. INDIAN ACTION FURTHER JUSTIFIED BY IAEA'S ALLEGED FAILURE TO MEET NEEDS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND CHARGE THAT REVELANT CLAUSES OF NPT ARE NOT BEING PUT INTO EFFECT.

2. IN SIMILAR VEIN, EDITORIAL IN LEADING BELGRADE DAILY POLITIKA MAY 23 NOTES THAT INDIA IS FIRST MEMBER OF NUCLEAR CLUB TO PUBLICLY DENY INTENTION TO PRODUCE WEAPONS ALTHOUGH GOI WAS UNDER DOMESTIC "PSYCHOLOGICAL" PRESSURE FROM PEOPLE AND MILITARY LEADERS DUE TO CONCERN ABOUT SECURITY. EARLIER
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PRESSURES ASCRIBED TO DEVELOPMENT OF MAINLAND CHINESE NUCLEAR

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CAPABILITY AND TENSIONS ON SUB-CONTINENT. ALTHOUGH THREAT OF WAR FROM CHINA "HAS VISIBLY VANISHED" AND ENMITY WITH PAKISTAN RECEDING, AMERICAN PLANS TO ESTABLISH "NAVAL NUCLEAR BASE" ON DIEGO GARCIA SAID TO CREATE NEW INDIAN APPREHENSIONS. EDITORIAL CONCLUDES, HOWEVER, THAT INDIRA GHANDI WOULD NOT UNDERMINE HER OWN ARGUMENTS TO KEEP INDIAN OCEAN "ATOM-FREE ZONE" BY BUILDING ATOMIC BOMB. "THERE IS EVERY REASON TO PRESUME THAT INDIA - EXCEPT IN CASE OF EXTREME NECESSITY - WILL NOT TURN ITS NEWLY ACQUIRED POWER INTO NUCLEAR ARSENAL."

3. COMMENT: EDITORIALS DOUBTLESS MEANT AS OFFICIAL GOY REATION TO INDIAN EXPLOSION. FORNOFF PRESS SPOKESMAN DID NOT HOLD CUSTOMARY THURSDAY PRESS CONFERENCE MAY 23 AS HE NORMALLY DOES WHEN THERE ARE IMPORTANT EVENTS TO COMMENT ON. FORNOFF OFFICIAL ALSO REFERRED EMBOFF TO FORTHCOMING POLITIKA ARTICLE WHEN ASKED SEVERAL DAYS AGO FOR OFFICIAL GOY REACTION; BEYOND THAT, HE WOULD ONLY SAY THAT GOY IS OPPOSED TO PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. EFFORT IN EDITORIALS TO PUT BEST FACE ON PROBLEMS BLAST CAUSES FOR YUGOSLAVS AS WELL AS REST OF WORLD IS HYPOCRITICAL APPLICATION OF DOUBLE-STANDARD, BY WHICH YUGOSLAVS SEEK TO EXCUSE THIRD WORLD FRIENDS FOR WHAT IN OTHERS WOULD BE CONDEMNED. HOWEVER, REPETITION OF INDIAN ASSURANCES OF PEACEFUL INTENTIONS IS DOUBTLESS SINCERE HOPE AND INCANTATION TO MAKE IT SO.
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